

External Assessment subject report

Modern History

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Contents

- Introduction** _____ **1**
- Overall commentary** _____ **2**
- Sample responses and commentaries** _____ **5**
 - Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry 5
 - Communicating historical knowledge 7
- Recommendations and guidance** _____ **9**
- Appendix 1: Instrument-specific standards matrix** _____ **10**
- Appendix 2: Glossary of terms** _____ **11**

Introduction

Queensland is working towards a new system of senior assessment and tertiary entrance that will include:

- a model that uses school-based assessment and common external assessment
- processes that strengthen the quality and comparability of school-based assessment
- a move away from the Overall Position (OP) rank to an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

In Semester 1 2016, the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) trialled external formative assessments in five subjects to:

- provide an opportunity for schools to become familiar with the use of subject-based external assessments
- test our processes for delivering external assessments.

These assessments were:

- aligned to existing syllabuses
- an alternative to a task already being undertaken at participating schools
- developed in consultation with subject experts from schools, subject associations and universities
- administered under secure conditions and graded externally.

The trial involved:

- approximately 19 000 students from 249 schools
- five Year 11 subjects:
 - Chemistry
 - English
 - Geography
 - Mathematics B
 - Modern History.

In addition, more than 400 teachers took part in the online marking operation.

This report provides information on the *External Assessment Trial: Modern History* assessment specifications, the sample responses and the performance characteristics of students.

The trial was conducted using the current syllabus, with Year 11 students and in a formative context. Commentaries and sample responses should be viewed in this context.

Electronic versions of the assessment are available online.

Claude Jones
Director, Assessment and Reporting Division

Overall commentary

The *External Assessment Trial: Modern History* was a *Category 1: Extended written response to historical evidence* developed by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) and conducted under supervised conditions. The assessment was completed by 276 students across 16 participating schools on Friday 3 June 2016. The majority of students responded using an online platform. Hardcopy source material was provided.

The *extended written response to historical evidence* was devised from the *Modern History Senior Syllabus 2004*. It required students to demonstrate their understanding of all descriptors in *Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry* and *Communicating historical knowledge* (Appendix 1).

The question posed related to the study of the relationships between youth, power and resistance in Nazi Germany (1933–1945) from Theme 6: *Studies of power*. Students were required to respond to the question: ‘Did the Edelweiss Pirates resist the power of the Third Reich?’. Eleven sources were provided to students, seven seen prior to the assessment and four unseen. The question asked students to create a historical argument by using and evaluating evidence from the sources (both seen and unseen) to support their argument. Students were required to reference relevant sources in their response.

In *Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry*, 88.4% of students achieved a passing grade (6.9% at A standard, 39.5% at B standard, 42% at C standard). The high number of B-results in *Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry* was due to a lack of evaluation of sources (*Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry*, descriptor 2). Students typically performed better in *Communicating historical knowledge*, with 88.8% of students achieving a passing grade (11.6% at A standard, 43.5% at B standard, 33.7% at C standard).

Note that the statistics in this report may be subject to rounding, resulting in totals not equal to 100 per cent.

Figure 1: Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry

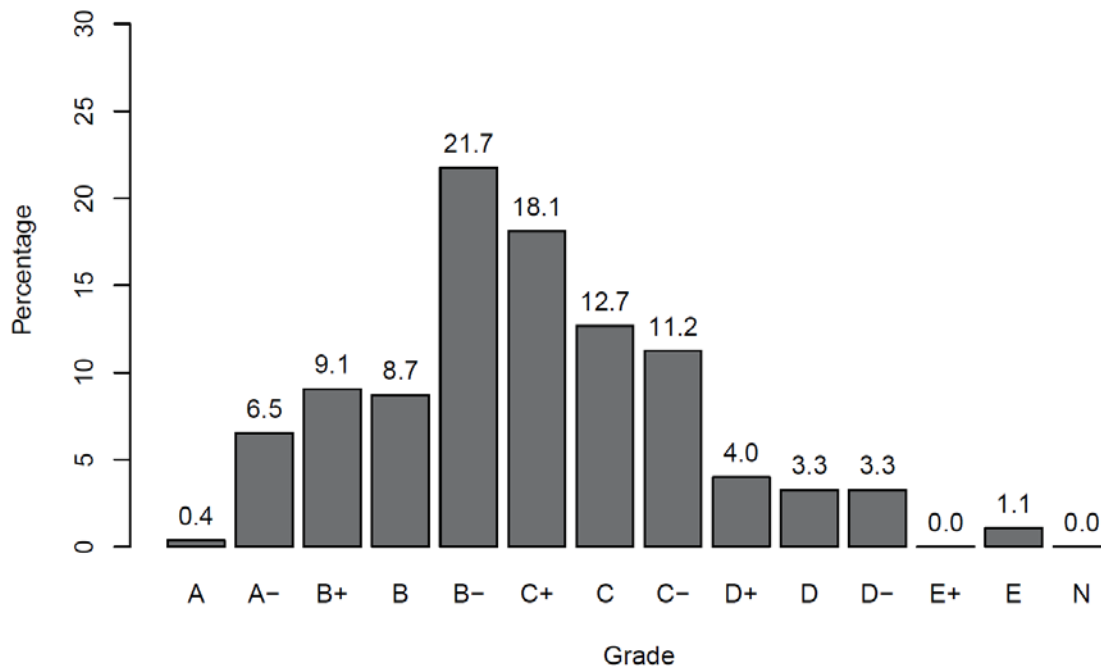


Figure 2: Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry by gender

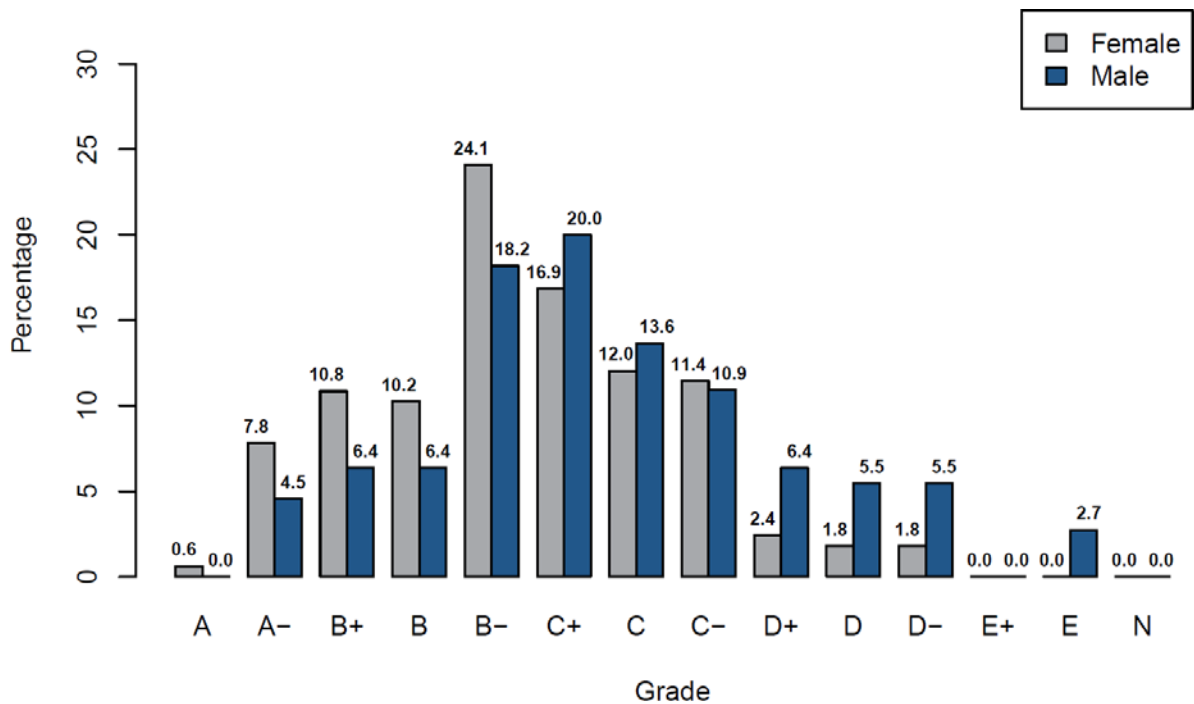


Figure 3: Communicating historical knowledge

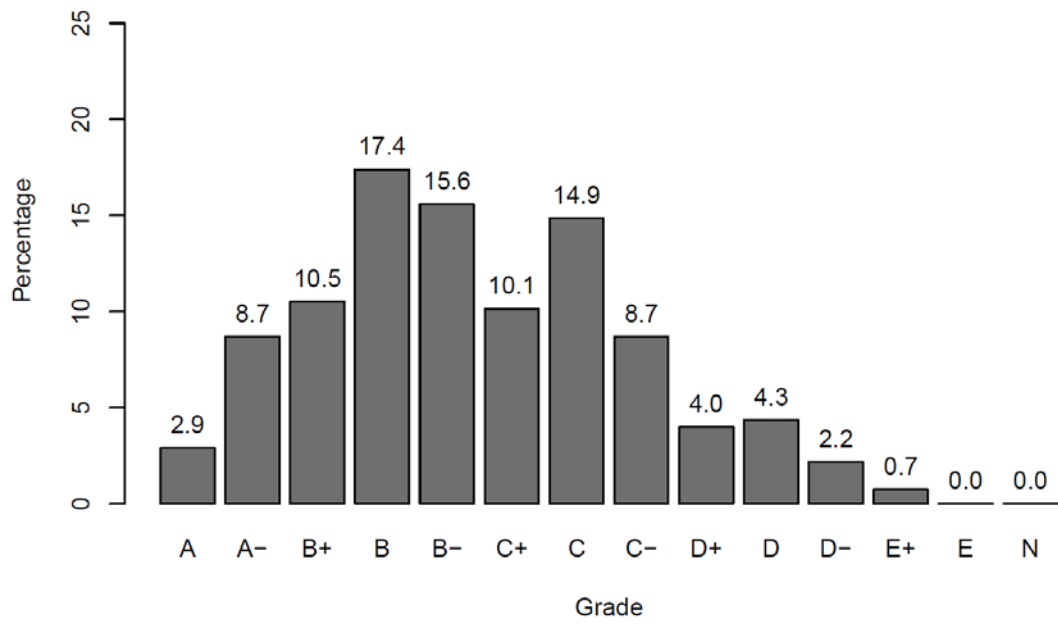
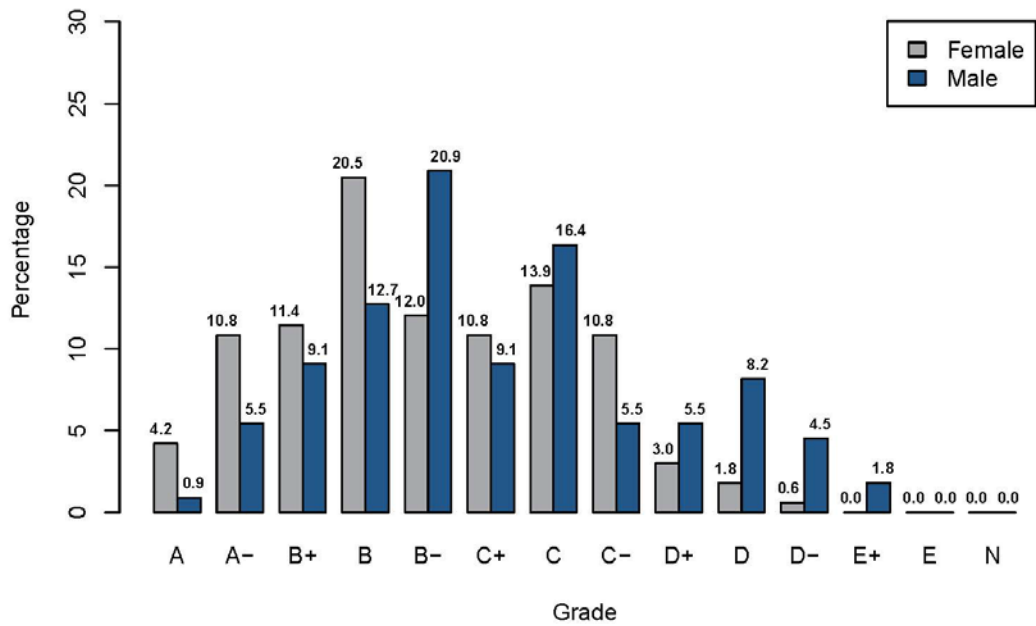


Figure 4: Communicating historical knowledge by gender



Sample responses and commentaries

Evidence from the responses included has not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual accuracy. Responses provided are a sample of responses only, and are not necessarily exemplary responses.

Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry

Using sources

Students were required to refer to both seen and unseen sources in their response. The majority of students referred to a diversity of the provided sources, but did not use them in the ways described in the sub-points of the A or B standard. Many of them comprehended the explicit meaning and information from sources and were generally able to organise the information into arguments or categories. Some responses demonstrated reference to implicit information from sources, most commonly referring to Source A to address this aspect. Most students were able to corroborate primary and secondary sources.

Students who used only one source per paragraph, without making clear links between each paragraph had difficulty corroborating sources. Some responses included highly rehearsed references to evidence from sources. This was detrimental to some students, as they then had difficulty linking evidence from the rehearsed response to their argument.

Responses at an A standard went beyond simply summarising or quoting from a diversity of primary and secondary sources. Instead, the sources were:

- used to identify and analyse implicit and explicit meanings, and patterns of information, then grouped into clear, convincing arguments
- perceptively interpreted to make clear links between the evidence in the source and the time period and context in which the source was produced. This evaluation was then used to justify both the selection of the source and the argument developed from it

Sample response

The Edelweiss Pirates primarily resisted the power of the Third Reich through their sabotage of the Hitler Youth groups. Such actions were the result of a deep-seated antipathy towards the control of the Nazi State over young Germans, demonstrated by a popular Edelweiss Pirates' song from the Navajos group: "Hitler's power may lay us low ... But we will smash the chains one day, We'll be free again" (Source B). As primary evidence written by members of the organisation itself, these lyrics may be considered representative of the members' disenchantment with the Third Reich — a perception of National Socialism that manifested itself in anti-Hitler Youth actions.

- corroborated to develop and strengthen an argument rather than simply pointing out similarities between sources. For example, Walter Meyer's recollections (Source C), the execution of Edelweiss Pirates (Source E) and Himmler's Decree on Youth Gangs (Source D) provided evidence from a series of sources that the Nazis perceived the Edelweiss Pirates' resistance as a threat.

Sample response

According to an interview conducted with Walter Mayer, a highly relevant source from a former Edelweiss Pirates member, "We became enemies and people began to look for us

because we went [sic] a little too drastic" (Source C). This statement, with the benefit of hindsight, reveals Nazi perspectives of the Edelweiss Pirates as enemies of the state. It is also corroborated by the photograph in Source E, showing a group of Edelweiss Pirates being prepared for execution by the Gestapo. As a primary photograph from Nazi records, this confronting image is likely to be an accurate record of the actions taken against prominent Edelweiss Pirates members. Furthermore, prominent Nazi figure Heinrich Himmler, the head of security, clearly held a resolutely anti-Edelweiss Pirates perspective, and believed the group's members should be closely monitored by the Nazi State. Himmler described the organisation as displaying "criminal, anti-social, or oppositional tendencies" calling for "appropriate steps ... taken against them ... as needed" (Source D).

Evaluating sources

Students addressed this descriptor least effectively. The majority of students did not demonstrate any evaluation of sources in their responses, preferring to give the author's name, title and then quote from the source. Where evaluation was attempted, a large number of students commented repeatedly on only one aspect, such as reliability. Successful evaluation of sources explained the extent to which the selected evidence was relevant, accurate, reliable and representative, and how the evaluation contributed to the overall argument. For example, evaluation of accuracy required a statement about the likely accuracy of the source and a justification of this statement. Responses that demonstrated this used evidence from both the source and the context statement to justify the evaluation.

Sample response

Similarly, widely published Nazi historian Jean-Denis GG Lepage elaborated on other oppositional acts committed by the Edelweiss Pirates, such as anti-Nazi graffiti and the distribution of leaflets denouncing the regime, corroborating the perspectives of Edelweiss Pirates' members in Source B (Source J). As an accredited academic with specialised knowledge on the topic, Lepage's account may be assumed an accurate account of the group's actions and motivations.

Similarly, responses that demonstrated an evaluation of representativeness referred to the perspective shown in the source *and* whether this perspective was dominant or marginalised. For example, identifying that Source D — as an official Nazi memorandum — provided the dominant view of how the Nazis perceived the Edelweiss Pirates towards the end of the war is an evaluation of representativeness.

Sample response

As a key figure in the Third Reich, Himmler's statement provides reliable evidence that the Nazis viewed the Edelweiss Pirates as a threat, and may be considered representative of Nazi perception of the organisation as "criminal" and "oppositional" (Source D).

Representativeness could also be evaluated by identifying the representative view of the Edelweiss Pirates in a particular time period. For example, Sources I and H suggest that many people have not heard of the Edelweiss Pirates, and Source H goes on to state that they have recently become local heroes in Cologne. A response evaluating representativeness would identify this, and then suggest that until recently, the representative view of the Edelweiss Pirates was that they were an insignificant group.

Responses often used the terms 'representative' or 'representativeness' but were simply identifying explicit information or a perspective within a source, such as identifying that Source A is representative of the uniforms worn by the Hitler youth.

Justifying decisions

Responses that used both explicit and implicit information, meanings and patterns, and clearly evaluated the worth of sources were able to provide clear justification of arguments. For example, a response which argued that the Edelweiss Pirates represented a resistance to the rigidity of the Hitler Youth rather than a political resistance to the Third Reich would be supported by a number of sources. Such a response would also evaluate these sources, explaining the worth of the sources and therefore the worth of the argument.

Communicating historical knowledge

Historical knowledge

Students generally demonstrated a sound understanding of definitions, key historical concepts, terms, events, developments and people relevant to the topic. There was some tendency for students to include excessive information about the Hitler Youth, which, while highly relevant to the sample paper provided, was less relevant to the question posed in the external assessment instrument. A common error was identifying the Edelweiss Pirates as a single group of youths, rather than a series of groups. Students who performed well considered resistance as a reaction to power in their responses, however, many students focused solely on resistance, without linking this to the nature of power. In alignment with the syllabus, the task instructed students to respond to the question 'mainly by reference to the sources' and many higher-performing students chose to contextualise their response with additional relevant knowledge from the period.

Presenting historical arguments

The majority of students created a historical argument, but did not always do so in the ways described by the sub-points at the A or B standard. Most students included both direct and indirect reference to evidence from relevant sources. Responses demonstrated a good control of referencing, with the majority of students using the author's name, quotation marks and the source number in parentheses (e.g. Source #) to reference evidence from a source. The majority of students controlled the conventions and vocabulary of historical writing. Common errors in the presentation of historical arguments included responses that:

- were narrative in style, rather than responding directly to the question posed
- quoted from sources without explaining how this evidence furthered the argument or supported the hypothesis
- focused on simply describing and explaining the content of sources.

Change and continuity

Historical arguments that incorporated concepts of change and continuity did so by acknowledging the changing perception of the Edelweiss Pirates' resistance over time. For example, this change in perception could be explained by acknowledging that:

- the Nazis perceived the Edelweiss Pirates as a threat during the war (Sources D and E)
- at the same time, the Allied Powers perceived them to be nothing more than youth gangs (Source K)
- some contemporary authors do not classify the Edelweiss Pirates as a serious political resistance group (Sources G and J)
- some contemporary authors classify the Edelweiss Pirates as resistance, but acknowledge they are largely unknown, or that this classification is a direct response to German post-war guilt (Sources I and H).

Reference to evaluation process

Responses that referred to the process of source evaluation without disrupting the argument embedded clear and accurate source evaluation into the argument, rather than simply using the context statements provided to begin sentences. To do this effectively, students must first evaluate sources as required in *Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry*, and then refer to this evaluation without disrupting their argument. The majority of students focused on maintaining the fluency of their argument at the expense of evaluating sources, which affected their result.

Style and conventions

The style and conventions of the task were met when students communicated a well-structured response to the question posed, linking each paragraph to an overall argument. Some students attempted to use complex vocabulary that did not convey appropriate meaning, and obscured their argument. Students demonstrated a well-structured response most effectively when they:

- communicated a clear hypothesis in their introduction
- constructed paragraphs with topic and concluding sentences which directly supported or expanded on the hypothesis
- used both direct and indirect evidence from sources
- consistently applied appropriate referencing techniques
- used historical terminology and vocabulary clearly and succinctly.

Often students strengthened the validity of their argument by acknowledging and refuting contradictory evidence.

Sample response

The resistance of the Edelweiss Pirates to the power of the Third Reich is also indicated by Nazi perception of the group as a threat to their complete authority. This is an important consideration, as often, resistance to power depends greatly on the perception of the one being resisted. As a result of the Pirates' sabotage and mockery of the Hitler Youth organisations and the Nazi State, the Edelweiss Pirates were often targets for Nazi persecution. According to an interview conducted with Walter Mayer, a highly relevant source from a former Edelweiss Pirates member, "We became enemies and people began to look for us because we went [sic] a little too drastic" (Source C). This statement, with the benefit of hindsight, reveals Nazi perspectives of the Edelweiss Pirates as enemies of the state. It is also corroborated by the photograph in Source E, showing a group of Edelweiss Pirates being prepared for execution by the Gestapo. As a primary photograph from Nazi records, this confronting image is likely to be an accurate record of the actions taken against prominent Edelweiss Pirates members. Furthermore, prominent Nazi figure Heinrich Himmler, the head of security, clearly held a resolutely anti-Edelweiss Pirates perspective, and believed the group's members should be closely monitored by the Nazi State. Himmler described the organisation as displaying "criminal, anti-social, or oppositional tendencies" calling for "appropriate steps ... taken against them ... as needed" (Source D). As a key figure in the Third Reich, Himmler's statement provides reliable evidence that the Nazis viewed the Edelweiss Pirates as a threat, and may be considered representative of Nazi perception of the organisation as "criminal" and "oppositional" (Source D). Whilst modern-day historians such as Perry Biddiscombe and Jean-Denis GG Lepage have strongly questioned that the Edelweiss Pirates were motivated by political goals (Sources G & J) as opposed to the "disciplinarianism of the HJ", primary evidence builds a strong case of Nazi perception of the organisation as a political threat, and therefore indicates the Edelweiss Pirates' opposition to the power of the Third Reich.

Recommendations and guidance

- To address *Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry* effectively, students must demonstrate an understanding of:
 - why the author of the historical evidence created the source
 - the effect this might have on how the item of historical evidence could be used.

In order to do this, students must be able to consider when a source was produced, who produced it and the possible values and motives behind its production. Information to support this process is contained in both the source itself and the accompanying context statement. An understanding of the time period and varying ideologies is important for students to be able to make meaning of this information. Familiarity with this process will increase students' historical literacy.

- Similarly, evaluation of the relevance, representativeness, likely accuracy and likely reliability of sources is important to demonstrate critical inquiry into sources. Evaluating a source requires more than simply quoting from the context statement. Students must use their historical knowledge, the context statement and the evidence within a source to decide whether a source is likely to be reliable or accurate, relevant or representative. Responses without evaluation of sources tend to be more narrative, rather than presenting a historical argument. Representativeness is defined in the *Modern History Senior Syllabus 2004* glossary to support the teaching and learning process.

Appendix 1: Instrument-specific standards matrix

	A	B	C	D	E
	In response to historical questions, the student:				
Forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a diversity of primary and secondary sources to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehend and apply explicit and implicit meanings analyse to identify implicit and explicit patterns of information and categorise evidence perceptively interpret values and motives and identify perspectives, while acknowledging the time period and context of a source's production corroborate primary and secondary sources evaluates the relevance, representativeness, likely accuracy and likely reliability of sources synthesises evidence from primary and secondary sources to justify insightful decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses primary and secondary sources to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehend explicit and implicit meanings analyse to identify explicit patterns and allocate information to categories interpret values and motives and identify perspectives corroborate secondary sources evaluates the relevance, likely accuracy and likely reliability of sources synthesises evidence from primary and secondary sources to make reasoned decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally uses primary and secondary sources to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehend explicit meanings identify simple and familiar concepts, values and motives that are explicit analyse to identify obvious themes or patterns recognise relevant sources detect bias in sources refers to mainly secondary sources to make obvious decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally, when dealing with historical sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies basic explicit facts comprehends some of the explicit meaning groups information according to identified classifications where decisions are made, supports them mainly with opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes some information relevant to a factual inquiry comprehends some factual detail in a basic historical source recognises information with some common characteristics in a basic historical source
	On balance across extended prose in examination conditions, the student:				
Communicating historical knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently communicates accurately recalled or selected definitions, key historical concepts, terms, events, developments and people, and the relationships among them presents coherent, valid historical arguments that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorporate concepts of change and continuity over time use extensive vocabulary in a succinct and effective manner accord closely with the style and conventions applicable to the format of the task refer to evaluation processes, without disrupting the argument incorporate direct and indirect references to diverse relevant historical evidence accurately use the conventions of a recognised system of referencing meets stipulated or negotiated requirements of tasks for length, format or scope of responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually communicates accurately recalled or selected definitions, key historical concepts, terms, events, developments and people presents coherent, credible historical arguments that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> refer to the causes and consequences of changes and continuities over time use vocabulary effectively accord for the most part with the style and conventions applicable to the task incorporate direct and indirect reference to relevant historical evidence use appropriate conventions of a recognised system of referencing meets stipulated or negotiated requirements of the task in most instances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicates some recalled or selected definitions and descriptions of key historical concepts, terms, events, developments and people presents coherent responses that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use some historical concepts incorporate some direct reference to appropriate sources of historical evidence are expressed in descriptive and explanatory language in which the meaning is discernible despite errors in vocabulary, style and conventions use some elements of a recognised system of referencing usually meets stipulated or negotiated requirements of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicates some recalled or selected accurate definitions and historical knowledge presents responses to basic historical research questions that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorporate some reference to sources of historical evidence convey meaning that is sometimes discernible despite frequent errors in vocabulary, style and conventions uses some elements of a recognised system of referencing, with frequent inaccuracies usually completes task, but may not meet all of the stipulated or negotiated requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicates little recall or selection of accurate historical knowledge presents responses to tasks that contain errors in vocabulary, style and conventions that obscure meaning where tasks are completed, rarely meets stipulated or negotiated requirements of tasks

Appendix 2: Glossary of terms

These terms may be used in the questions or cue statements in the assessment.

Term	Definition
agree/disagree	support or refute a statement; give the positive or negative features; express an informed opinion one way or the other; list the advantages for or against ¹
analyse	identify components and the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications ²
argue	an historical argument is persuasive when historical evidence is interpreted, evaluated and applied to develop an hypothesis ¹
comprehend	understand the meaning or nature of; grasp mentally ³
corroborate	strengthen and/or support an assertion with evidence from a variety of reliable sources to make it more certain ¹
evaluate	careful examination of sources to judge relevance, reliability, representativeness, accuracy and authenticity, and thus their worth ¹
evidence	information derived from primary and secondary sources used to support or refute assertions that are made when responding to a question or developing and testing hypotheses ¹
infer	to imply or hint; to draw a conclusion, as by reasoning ³
interpret	to identify implicit meanings in historical sources to explain what has happened in the past; the discipline of history acknowledges that all interpretations are partial ¹
investigate	plan, inquire into and draw conclusions about ²
justify	support an argument or conclusion with historical evidence ²
perspective	a point of view or standpoint from which historical events, problems and issues are analysed ¹
representativeness	when testing for representativeness historians explore whether a source reflects a dominant or mainstream perspective as opposed to a minor or marginalised perspective on an issue or period of time ¹
synthesise	putting together various elements to make a whole ²
Sources:	
¹ Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority	
² Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) New South Wales, <i>A Glossary of Key Words</i> , www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/glossary_keywords.html	
³ Macquarie Dictionary online, Macquarie Dictionary Sixth Edition, www.macquariedictionary.com.au	